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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
HONG KONG BUREAU

MHK-0037
6 August 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Hong Kong Bureau Monthly Report for July 1981

I. OPERATIONS

1. Xinhua Service: On 24 July, the bureau began direct monitoring of Xinhua Chinese. After resolving some initial technical problems, we are in the process of comparing the Hong Kong service with that received by Okinawa Bureau. Although we had anticipated that the Hong Kong service would be quite similar to Okinawa's in both format and content, with the major difference being in transmission times, early results of the comparison show this not to be the case.

Hong Kong's file seems to be tailored for the overseas Chinese community. Thus far it has consisted of a much smaller number of items than Okinawa receives, some of which have been attributed by the service to Xinhua and others to Zhonguo Xinwen She ("New China News Service") which traditionally has been geared to overseas Chinese. Our service seems to lack much of the bite contained in the domestic transmissions received by Okinawa. One of the few early items directly comparable with one monitored by Okinawa involved a report on the Vatican, the Okinawa version of which was far more condemnatory than Hong Kong's.

At this early point, therefore, we are somewhat disappointed with the intrinsic value of the Hong Kong service, nor do we feel it can be much of a backup for Okinawa's Xinhua. We should be able to draw firmer conclusions by this time next month.

2. Typhoon Threat: The bureau was forced to severely curtail operations on 6 July as Typhoon Lynn struck Hong Kong. Lynn caused some damage and injuries (mostly from windblown debris) in the colony, but the bureau and all employees were spared.

3. Lightning Strikes--Again: For the second time since it went into operation, the bureau's remote system was rendered "hors de combat" by the very bolts that are not supposed to strike twice. Little coverage was lost as Okinawa came to our aid in picking up some PRC regional radios,

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while others were monitored using the bureau's backup antenna, and the bureau's able technician, [] was able to repair the damage to the remote system. We are in the process of taking further steps to protect the system against yet a third strike (any odds?).

4. Circuit Upgrade: Effective 15 July, the bureau's communications were upgraded from 75 to 150 baud. The increased speed will add to the efficiency of the wireroom--where some of the most serious backlogs have occurred--and will be especially helpful in clearing large amounts of stored incoming material on mornings after the bureau has been closed for the night.

5. Monitoring: [] has taken over the job of recording Beijing, Shijiazhuang and Tianjin radios, replacing contractor Judith McCahill, who did a fine job for us. The bureau chief had a chance to discuss [] duties with her when she visited the bureau on 14 July.

6. New Production Record: July marked a milestone in the bureau's continuing program to increase collection on China: over 664,000 publishable words were filed (742,000 total words, not including Consulate General unclassified traffic of about 150,000 words). These figures are the highest in the bureau's history. ✓

7. Extel ASR for Telex: At the suggestion of teletypist [] we requested Hong Kong Cable & Wireless to replace its Siemens telex terminal in the bureau with an Extel ASR. The installation was made this month. In addition to its telex function, the C&W ASR doubles as a sorely needed additional punching position, only taking up the space that was occupied by the seldom used Siemens, and saves a bundle on the purchase of a new ASR that would have had to have been ordered.

8. Royal Nuptials: The bureau went to limited holiday staffing on the 29th (and the Consulate General closed entirely) as the Royal Wedding was declared an official holiday in Hong Kong. We are slightly miffed, however, that none of us was invited.

II. ADMINISTRATION

1. Security Survey: The bureau underwent a rigorous security survey the week of 20-24 July. In addition to the usual areas of concern in such inspections, at stake was whether we would be allowed to maintain classified material in Hopewell. We had argued strenuously that the removal of our safe would entail serious disruptions in the bureau's operations, and at a minimum would require that office space be provided for the bureau chief and a secretary in the Consulate itself.

Although the matter cannot be said to be completely settled, the concluding report recommended that we be allowed to keep the safe, provided that a number of steps were taken. These include: 1) Reducing the amount of classified material to 30 minutes' burn time and that our Intimus disintegrator be installed in the strengthened area where the safe is located; 2) Increasing the existing guard service to 24 hours; and

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3) Reinforcing bureau doors and installing additional locks, closed circuit television cameras and alarm devices. The report, a copy of which is being pouched to headquarters, also recommended a number of procedural changes. (AIUO)

2. New Personnel: As of this month, we have recruited candidates for five of the ten new non-staff positions that we were recently authorized. Two teletypists have been hired: [redacted] who EOD'd on 13 July, and [redacted] who begins in early August. An additional associate editor, [redacted] an Australian resident of Hong Kong, is in processing. Also in process are two monitors expected to EOD late this month or in September. Yet another monitor, [redacted] rounded out our old non-staff ceiling when he began work on 6 July. At this point we plan to taper off our recruiting activities in order to devote more time to training and intergrating our new employees. This will also give us some time to reassess the mix of the ten monitors, teletypists and associate editors we have envisioned, so as to assure a smoothly functioning balance.

3. Staffers Hospitalized: Editors [redacted] were hospitalized briefly this month and released. Both are well.

III. VISITS

A. To the Bureau

1. On 13 July the bureau chief met with Charles Freeman, formerly EAC director in the State Department, who was in Hong Kong en route to his new post as DCM in Beijing. ✓

2. [redacted]

3. Outgoing Okinawa Bureau Chief Engineer [redacted] and his replacement, [redacted] 12-15 July. While here [redacted] visited the satellite reception facilities of the International Herald Tribune,

B. From the Bureau

Deputy Bureau Chief [redacted] visited Okinawa Bureau 26-30 July.

[redacted]
Chief, Hong Kong Bureau

Attachments:

- A. Production
 - B. List of Equipment received
 - C. Coverage Schedule
- cc: Orig. & 3 /Hqs

Chief, Okinawa and Seoul Bureau
File

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